

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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R 271227Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1216

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 2930

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT IS

SUBJ: HISTADRUT FEARS POSSIBLE RENEWAL OF PROTEST IN GALILEE

1. REUVEN KATZAV, ACTING DIRECTOR HISTADRUT ARAB DEPT, AND HIS DEPUTY YUSIF KHAMIS, WHO RECENTLY RETURNED FROM TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES, HAVE TOLD LABATT THAT TENSION AMONG ARAB CITIZENS IN GALILEE CONTINUES HIGH, DESPITE GOVERNMENT AND HISTADRUT EFFORTS TO RENEW DIALOGUE WITH LOCAL ARAB COMMUNITY LEADERS. THEY CITED TWO EVENTS IN THE NEAR FUTURE WHICH HOLD POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER DISTURBANCES.

2. KATZAV FEARED THAT THE FIRST CRUCIAL TEST WILL BE MAY 1 WHEN RAKAH MAY TRY TO HOLIDAY DAY PARADES IN NAZARETH AND OTHER RAKAH-DOMINATED COMMUNITIES DESPITE THE FACT THAT POLICE HAVE REFUSED PERMITS, OSTENSIBLY ON THE GROUND THAT NO PARADES ARE ALLOWED ON SABBATH. (ISRAELI SUPREME COURT ON APRIL 26 REJECTED A RAKAH APPEAL AGAINST THE POLICE DECISION AS REGARDS NAZARETY.) IF RAKAH DEFIES THE POLICE BAN, ESPECIALLY IN NAZARETH, POLICE WOULD PROBABLY TRY TO STOP THE PARADES WHICH IN TURN COULD LEAD TO VIOLENCE AND TO A RENEWED WAVE OF PROTESTS.

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3. THE SECOND TEST IS LIKELY TO BE MAY 25 WHEN SIX ARAB COMMUNITIES

IN THE GALILEE AND ONE IN THE TRIANGLE WILL HOLD MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. IN SEVERAL OF THESE COMMUNITIES, INCLUDING SAKHNIN, WHERE FOUR OF THE SEVEN DEATHS OCCURRED DURING THE LAND DAY RIOTS, THE LABOR DOMINATED MUNICIPAL COUNCILS HAVE COME UNDER STRONG CHALLENGE FROM RAKAH. BOTH DATES--MAY 1 AND MAY 25--ARE CONSIDERED BY KATZAV AS TESTS OF THE STATE OF JEWISH-ARAB COMMUNITY RELATIONS AFTER THE MARCH 30 TROUBLES.

4. COMMENT: IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER RAKAH WILL CHALLENGE THE GOVERNMENT BY PURSUING ITS PLANS FORMAY DAY DEMONSTRATIONS AND, IF SO, WHETHER VIOLENCE WILL AGAIN RESULT BETWEEN ARAB CITIZENS AND SECURITY FORCES. THE COURT DECISION WOULD SEEM TO MAKE A PARADE, A LEAST IN NAZARETY, ILLEGAL AND WOULD SERVE TO LEGITIMATE WHATEVER STEPS POLICE MIGHT FEEL NECESSARY. VILLAGE ELECTIONS ON MAY 25 PRESENT A MORE COMPLEX CHALLENGE, INVOLVING A POLITICAL STRUGGLE BETWEEN YOUNGER ARAB DISSIDENTS CHAMPIONED BY RAKAH AND ESTABLISHED LEADERS DISCREDITED TO A LARGE DEGREE BY THEIR PAST ASSOCIATION WITH THE ZIONIST ESTABLISHMENT. BOTH DATES WILL RPROVIDE TRUE TESTS FOR RAKAH, AS IT SEEKS TO MAINTAIN ITS NATIONALIST IMAGE WHILE REMAINING A LEGITIMATE ISRAELI POLITICAL PARTY, AND FOR THE GOVERNMENT ANDHISTADRUT AS THEY ATTEMPT TO RESTORE THE DIALOGUE WITH ARAB CITIZENS AND FORESTALL RECURRING VIOLENCE. TOON

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